PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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FISTS UP, FIGHT BACK

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OUR FIGHT

★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

★Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorials

Elections: An Exercise in Imperialism

Nearly a century ago, the working class of the Russian Empire stormed the palaces of their capitalist Russian bosses. The world changed forever. Led by the Bolsheviks, their revolutionary communist party, peasants and industrial workers turned the imperialist World War I into revolutionary war. They established the world's first workers' state over one-sixth of the globe.

Daring to struggle and daring to win, those communists led the first attempt by our class to wipe capitalism off the earth.

It's cleanup time again. Each day, the world's rulers intensify their racist and sexist oppression of the international working class. Each day, they move closer to the next world war.

Workers are increasingly fed up with deteriorating conditions and they are looking for solutions. Some are choosing the gutter racism of the right: Donald Trump swept the New Hampshire primary and fascist parties are on the rise in Europe. Some are choosing the fake left: socialist candidates are finding widespread support from Spain to the U.S. to Greece.

None of these options have anything to offer the working class. All they will do is win another generation of workers away from revolution and towards reform. The Progressive Labor Party is an international revolutionary communist organization fighting and build a mass party of millions in 27 countries to smash global capitalism.

Afghanistan: U.S. Bosses Can't Stop Killing

U.S. imperialists are steadily losing ground to their Russian and Chinese rivals. Represented by liberal mouthpiece Barack Obama, the U.S. bosses signed a nuclear deal with Iran—not for peace, but to buy time to rebuild their war machine. To hold on to their embattled empire, the capitalists know they'll need more viciously racist budget cuts—plus a military draft that will likely include the compulsory registration of women (New York Times, 2/2/16). To protect their profits, the rulers are ready and willing to spend millions of workers' lives.

In Afghanistan, where the U.S. has been at war since 2001, the bosses' bloody grasp is slippery at best:

> *Top U.S. military commanders… are now quietly talking about an American commitment that could keep thousands of troops in the country for decades (Washington Post, 1/26/16).*

A follow-up (2/6/16) elaborated:

> *Senior Pentagon officials are now examining a range of steps…in what is expected to be a bloody 2016….Obama has already abandoned plans to end the military presence entirely by the time he leaves office…*

Elections: Imperialist Tool

Whoever wins the next U.S. presidential election will be commander-in-chief of the occupation in Afghanistan—and nearly 800 military bases in more than 70 countries. In other words, the winner will be at the service of finance capital. As Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin pointed out in 1916, capitalism inevitably leads to imperialism—the exploitation of labor, resources, and markets outside a nation's boundaries.

Lenin showed how the big banks, like today's Citigroup and JPMorgan Chase, are directly tied to institutions like ExxonMobil. Finance capital depends on capitalist government's capacity to control oil, minerals and workers in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Southern and Southeast Asia.

Sanders' Blood-Soaked Liberalism

U.S. presidential candidate Bernie Sanders has seized the attention of masses of students and young workers and increasing numbers of Black workers. Hillary Clinton, the imperialist bosses' candidate of choice, barely beat Sanders in the Iowa causes before getting trounced by the self-proclaimed "socialist" in the February 9 New Hampshire primary. Sanders' talking points never vary; he denounces rising inequality and vows, if elected, to "break up" the biggest U.S. banks.

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Zika: A Bloody Imperialist Disease

The bosses are blaming nature (the climate change by El Niño) on the Zika virus epidemic. Zika has become an international working class crisis not by nature, but capitalism. Poverty, inadequate water supplies, viciously racist and sexist health care systems, neighborhoods littered with rubbish, polluting river systems, and more are the real causes. The Zika virus is expected to infect as many as 4 million workers throughout Latin America (see map, page 5). These millions are victims of capitalism's sexist and racist neglect.

In such a setting, it is virtually impossible to establish a public health infrastructure that might help contain the Zika outbreak. Workers understandably do not trust the governments, and the governments put a low priority on public services.

Bosses' Main Concern: Dip in Profit

Medical access for pregnant women and babies are the least of the capitalists' concerns. What they are really worried about are its impact on their businesses.

"Containing and managing an outbreak is expensive, as is dealing with large numbers of dead and infected. This can lead to severe disruptions in trade… And then there is the loss of productivity resulting not only from sickness but those refusing to work and those taking time off to care for the infected" (Stratfor, 2/1).

And so, in the interest of capitalism, Obama will request $1.8 billion in emergency funding to fight Zika in the U.S. and internationally. If Ebola, Cholera, and Hurricane Katrina is any indication, "humanitarian aid" translates to fascist policies, ramping up of the military, and practicing for controlling the working class. Obama has responded to Ebola with increased military presence in West Africa (Washington Post, 10/26/14).

Women Workers Hit the Hardest

The Zika virus is linked to birth defects in babies born to infected mothers. Over 4,000 babies have already been born with microcephaly, a congenital disorder associated with an abnormally small head and impaired brain development.

Even the health ministry in Brazil, where the disease has hit 1.5 million, admits, "most mothers with children with microcephaly have come from poor communities" (The Guardian, 2/6).

The governments of El Salvador, Colombia, Jamaica and Honduras have a solution: abstinence. They are telling women to delay pregnancy until the virus is under control. Working-class women are criminalized for abortions and have little access to contraceptives, not to mention pathetic maternal healthcare.

When the UN's World Health Organization labeled the Zika outbreak an international health emergency, it was one more reminder that the world's working class must move swiftly to overthrow the perversity of the capitalist profit system by building a revolutionary Progressive Labor Party for communism. Communism will empower the masses, build social infrastructure to cope with any challenges, and crush the sexist, racist structures that murder and demobilize the working class. With the leadership of Progressive Labor Party, it is time to build on that history and smash capitalism once and for all!✪

Smash Sexist Deportations

BROOKLYN, January 30—"Workers' struggles have no borders!"

"Amnesty yes! Deportations no!"

"We are workers, not illegals!"

Chants in Spanish and English rang out today through an immigrant neighborhood. Members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party led a lively, multiracial march against the surge in deportations under Barack Obama's racist administration. We drew attention from workers and youth, many of whom raised fists and nodded their heads in agreement. Some even joined us for a time.

The march consisted of immigrant and native-born women and men marching shoulder to shoulder. We distributed a thousand bilingual leaflets headlined "Fight Racism—Stop Deportations," and over 650 CHALLENGEs. Eager to organize with an international communist group like PLP, many workers gave us their contact information.

Immigrant and citizen workers march against ICE raids
Poster on right reads, "No deportations! Smash all borders"

Obama Targets Women and Children FirstThe U.S. has ratcheted up its sexist, racist terror campaign against mainly Latin women and children. Jeh Johnson, Obama's Secretary of Homeland Security, announced that more than 100,000 families would be deported because asylum-seeking mothers and children are fleeing violence in too large a number. Many of these refugees hail from El Salvador, the murder capital of the world. After 121 were deported earlier this year, causing public outrage, the raids were allegedly halted, but the government could resume them at any time. In his seven years as deporter-in-chief, Obama has kicked out 2.5 million people.

Capitalism continues to cause suffering and death for immigrant workers and families, from refugees fleeing imperialist-backed wars in Syria and Yemen to mass deportations in the U.S. Now the rulers are singling out women and children from Central America, those who fled violence and economic deprivation in 2014. Under the capitalist profit system, racism is always at center stage; anti-Black, anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and anti-Latin slander and attacks.

Embolden Workers to Fight Back

As our PLP collective continues the slow, sometimes difficult, process of building our Party, it is important to note the pressing needs of the working class and encouraging to see their openness to the Party's ideas. Workers in this neighborhood face a daily struggle. They work long hours, sometimes two jobs, to pay super-high rents. They live in fear of racist terror from the police, the courts and immigration raids at their homes, shopping areas or job sites.

In such an intimidating, racist climate, workers in the neighborhood were inspired to see a group proudly declare solidarity with undocumented families. The international working class needs to build the communist Progressive Labor Party to lead workers to revolution, smash capitalism, and establish workers' power and an egalitarian society. Our task is both short- and long-term. It requires both urgency and patience.

Wherever and however we can, our PLP collective is taking our ideas directly to the working class. We are planning more actions like today's. Small struggles have the potential to grow!✪

Bosses' Tactics No Match for Striking Workers

PAKISTAN, February 9—The working class here is facing the terrible exploitation. Pakistani bosses are trying to make the lives of poor working class more miserable by privatizing big industries and business. Actually Pakistani bosses are acting upon the instructions of world imperialists. On the advice of IMF, World Bank and other monetary institutions, Pakistani bosses are increasing tax over the salaried individuals and working class people (and giving tax amnesty to rich people), taking back the subsidies and privatizing schools, hospitals and other big industries.

Pakistan International Airlines has more than twenty six thousand employees in Pakistan. Government's decision to privatize PIA fueled the strikes all over the Pakistan. Joint Action Committee of PIA (which is formed by different unions in PIA) launched big demonstrations in different cities of Pakistan. In one of the largest demonstration in Karachi some "unknown" people killed three employees of PIA. After this horrible incident workers decided to suspend all flight operation because of that there was no flight for four days. Subsequently government decided to impose "Essential Services Act" which bans all the union activities and strikes. With the help of some so called union misleaders and "Essential Services Act" bosses are trying to resume the flight operation.

Doctors and other health employees are also striving against bad working conditions, low wage and harassment at work places in Khyber Pukhtoon Khawa province of Pakistan. Draconian law of "Essential Services Act" has also been imposed in KPK to prevent doctors and health employees to organize strikes but it is difficult for the bosses to prevent big strikes of working class in KPK.

Women workers shout slogans during a sit-in protest by Pakistan International Airlines workers

Teachers are also organizing strikes in Punjab province of Pakistan. They are demanding an increase in pay, security at work places and free health and educational facilities for them and their families. Bosses are using tear gas, baton charge and jails to keep the teachers away from strikes.

Health Employees association in Kashmir and Paramedical Association in Baluchistan is striving against exploitation, price hike and low wage. Misleaders are playing the role to keep the bosses rich by breaking the strikes but anger of workers is proving that nobody can stop them.

Terrorism is playing vital role to strengthen the bosses by giving them an excuse to use power against poor working class.✪

Teachers Attack Fascist Education Reforms

MEXICO, February 10— The crisis of overproduction hits Mexico, driving bosses to attack workers. The working class is fighting back!

The overproduction of oil is causing a worldwide crisis for capitalist bosses, and the bosses of Mexico are in crisis, too. As always, the bosses are increasing their attacks against the working class to try and salvage their unjust and criminal system, and at the same time increase their enormous wealth.

Bosses Try to Centralize Control

In Mexico, the local capitalist class is using a new law, Pact for Mexico, in order to unify the capitalist class and more efficiently attack workers. The Pact has support from all levels and branches of government across the political spectrum, from the ruling right-wing party PRI to the fake-left Green Party. They hope that by getting all the bosses on the same page, they can crack down on worker resistance and restore profits, thus furthering the attack on students.

With this law, the federal and state governments are trying to reassert control over the unions. Part of this law affects the education workers and the teacher's union. Teachers are being forced to participate in punitive job evaluations and they are losing their power of collective bargaining. All of this translates to attacks on job benefits and wages, and therefore a lower quality education for students. They are attacking teachers with the military, the bosses' media, and freezing of the union bank accounts, arresting union leaders, and the orders to jail union leaders, amongst other strategies.

To confront these fascist policies, the teachers union (CNTE) and its Oaxaca local Section 22 called for walkouts, marches, and strikes. As state intimidation increases, teacher participation in these actions is declining. In response, Section 22 of the teachers union organized a Political Congress in January 2016, with the main objective of reorganizing and strengthening the resistance movement.

Union Leaders Con Workers into Electoral Farce

What did the union leaders decide at the Political Congress? Not organizing for more fightback! The union misleaders, phony communists, and reformist groups are once again trying to lead the workers of Section 22 into bourgeois electoral politics, which can never serve working-class interests. They are organizing a "punishment vote" by urging workers to vote against the dominant parties. History has shown time and time again that voting for different parties can never bring change. Only with fightback and communist revolution can the working class get what they deserve: a world where they are the decision makers. In that fightback spirit, teachers burned electoral papers (see front page photo).

Among these opportunists are Aristarco Aquino Solís, ex-General Secretary for PRD, a leading liberal political party. In 2006, the PRD approved the deployment of the federal police (Policía Federal Preventiva, PFP). These police arrested and jailed hundreds of teachers, students and farm workers in Nayarit and other states. In 2007, they used Section 22 to make a pact to vote for Gabino Cue for governor of Oaxaca, as "punishment vote to [dominant parties] PRI and PAN". Gabino betrayed the teachers in 2015 accepting the Education Reform, the punitive evaluation, and the teachers have not been paid more than 5,000 pesos since then. He called for the arrests of leaders of the teachers strike and jailed Othón Nazariega, Roberto Jiménez, Efraín Picasso y Juan Carlos Orozco.

Other misleaders are Zenén Bravo, militant for the UTE-FPR-Communist Party of Mexico and Perfecto Mesinas Quero (local legislator for Convergencia, the actual party of the governor of Oaxaca Gabino Cué Monteagudo).

Thousands march in Mexico City against education reforms

In 2015, these parties joined to sign the Pact

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No Justice for Black Working-Class Women Under Capitalism

BROOKLYN, January 21 — "If we don't get it, shut it down!" Members of Progressive Labor Party and The Committee for Justice for Kyam Livingston chanted as we took the street and stopped traffic in front of the Brooklyn Criminal Court building where Kyam was murdered thirty months ago.

After hours of suffering in pain, crying for help, being threatened that the kkkops would "lose" her papers if she didn't stop complaining, Kyam died while waiting for a simple arraignment before a judge. Thirty months have passed but no criminal or departmental charges have been lodged against the kkkops who murdered her by refusing her cries for medical attention. We have also learned how the (in)justice system serves the bosses' racist, sexist system.

No Justice Under This System

We began our rally as we have many, many times before by detailing the facts and politics of this case. Today, our plan was to demand the arrest of those responsible. Our long struggle has produced the tapes showing the last seven painful hours of Kyam's life spent in a filthy, vermin-infested holding cell. Kyam's mom confronted the kkkops outside of the courthouse. She demanded they be held responsible. She demanded the arrest of the murderers. They did nothing. Then Kyam's mom and several supporters went inside the building. In a courtroom, they made the same demand. The same result. Next, they confronted supervising court cops. Again, either with smiling faces or stony silence, they did nothing. The ska and reggae musician Jimmy Cliff was right: "It's rebellion these kind of action breeds. I can't get no justice under this system."

The long struggle for Justice for Kyam has shown once again that the racist, sexist capitalist system holds little regard for the lives of Black women workers. KKKops ruthlessly kill our working-class brothers and sisters and then get off scot-free. That is how capitalist justice works! Under capitalism, the police serve the capitalist class, not the working class. Their role is to enforce the bosses' laws and terrorize workers, especially Black and Latin, to prevent rebellions. With worsening capitalist conditions, police terror will only intensify.

Shut This Racist System Down

Only a communist society where the working class has state power can rid the world of racist killer kkkops. Justice is a world without bosses, profits, cops, or borders. We must build PLP worldwide in order to overthrow capitalism and create a state for workers. That is why we chanted, "If we don't get it, shut it down!" and took to the streets. As we gave speeches about capitalist injustice, almost everyone walking by took CHALLENGE and some had conversations with us about revolution. This long struggle is only the beginning of building for a communism. We invite readers and your friends to join us as we keep up the struggle on the 21st of every month. Kyam means we've got to fight for revolution.✪

KKKops Off Racist Schools

WORCESTER, MA — Members and friends of PLP protested at the City Council meeting to condemn cops in public schools.

The police presence is a racist reaction to the majority 55 percent Black and Latin students. From the beginning of this school year to November 23, 19 students have been arrested, including two from the middle school. The majority of these arrests have been for "disruption and disorderly conduct," which are not crimes. These arrests are another aspect of growing fascism in the schools.

PLP members, some who are educators, spoke about the school-to-prison pipeline and how it has a devastating effect on mainly Black, Latin, Asian and white working-class students. We also read a petition to the Council against arresting children in schools, signed by over 100 community residents.

Schools Teach Obedience

Two professors of sociology at a local university pointed out that police in schools make the environment more dangerous rather than safer for children and teachers. The professors shared studies showing when students are arrested they do not graduate. The City is using the Alabama model for training on School Resource Officers (SRO's), which maximizes minor infractions or annoyances and make them an offense subject to arrest. Once the cops are called to the school they're compelled to make an arrest; now these students will have a criminal record. We stated that under no circumstances do we want cops in the schools and called for replacing SRO's with more art and music teachers and guidance counselors, along with conflict and peer mediation. We need multiracial unity of teachers, students, parents and workers. We cannot leave the education of our children to the police, or to hedge-fund bosses.

Worcester is looking to close its $2 million budget gap, but the highest paid employees of the City, after the city manager, are police. This reflects the role of education. Capitalism needs public education to enforce discipline over our class — to teach the future workers obedience, patriotism and passivity.

Union Head Blames the Victim

Our group was multiracial, well-received, and included women and men, parents, professors, teachers and cafeteria and hospital workers. After the PLP members and friends from the community spoke, the head of the teachers union (who signed our petition) also spoke and said he agrees with us on some things. But he believes having the cops in the schools will keep the teachers safe since there have been some teachers hurt when breaking up fights between students. Such racism towards students is no surprise in a system founded on the racist reaping of super-profits off the backs of Black and immigrant workers. Teachers' enemies are not students — it's capitalism. There is no safe place for students or teachers under capitalism.

We need an international communist Party that fights for the working class. Workers led by PLP will continue to struggle against the criminalization of our children. We are meeting with parent groups and will make our demands at the School Committee.

PLP is taking hold of the political climate in the City of Worcester and injecting it with revolutionary politics and action. The only way to really fight for students is through the unity of teachers, students and parents. And we must point out that even with more money, even with any reform, the role of schools is to teach workers to accept and internalize capitalist relations. The final victory will come when we can unite all workers to destroy capitalism through communist revolution.✪

U.S. Elections: Republicans, Democrats All the Same

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As it turns out, this position has been endorsed by many arch-capitalists. As the billionaire-owned Forbes noted (January 17): "Regulators and the stock market aren't waiting for the election of President Sanders…Big banks would be more valuable if they were broken up into pieces rather than keeping them intact."

By tightening financial regulations and disciplining the banks, the leading bosses would tighten their hold on the financial system. The dominant capitalist wing, aligned with Exxon-Mobil, could then channel profits into rebuilding a weakened U.S. military. For finance capital, the top priority is to occupy the Middle East and Central Asia and consolidate control over cheaply extracted oil.

As a congressman and U.S. senator, Bernie Sanders voted "yes" on the invasion of Afghanistan, for "regime change" in Libya, for the U.S.-led NATO devastation of Yugoslavia, and—after one initial "no" vote—for the ongoing war and occupation of Iraq. Appearing on "Face the Nation," Sanders said he was "impressed by the quality" of assassin-in-chief Obama's foreign policy. As Counterpunch observed:

> *Imperialism is like a tank parked in your living room, too big to ignore…[F]oreign policy cannot be separated from domestic policy. They are two sides of the same coin that directly affect each other. ….Supporting Bernie Sanders means ignoring — or minimizing — his imperialism…. (1/5/16).*

Revolution and Reform

For the moment, there is no place in the world where workers hold state power. In general, the mass movements addressing racism, sexism and imperialism are misled by liberal capitalist stooges, from Bernie Sanders to the fake-left Pakistan People's Party.

PL'ers and friends are hard at work within these movements to struggle for communist ideas and win workers to organizing a mass, international, fighting PLP. Even as our class suffers attack after attack, even as we face the worst refugee crisis in history, we have the power to build a new Red Army and seize state power. Learning from both the mistakes and triumphs of the working class in the Soviet Union and China, let us transform the bosses' imperialist bloodbaths into revolutionary war. Let us smash all racist borders, and take the revolution all the way to communism. Join us—and help lead us!✪

Zika: A Capitalist Outbreak

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Where Bosses Fail, Workers Lead

A common question or doubt made towards a communist future goes like, "How can we expect workers to run society, without some group of people working exclusively as management, and receiving more to do so?" In the middle of an especially challenging shift in the hospital, I observed a powerful lesson we can use to respond to that question.

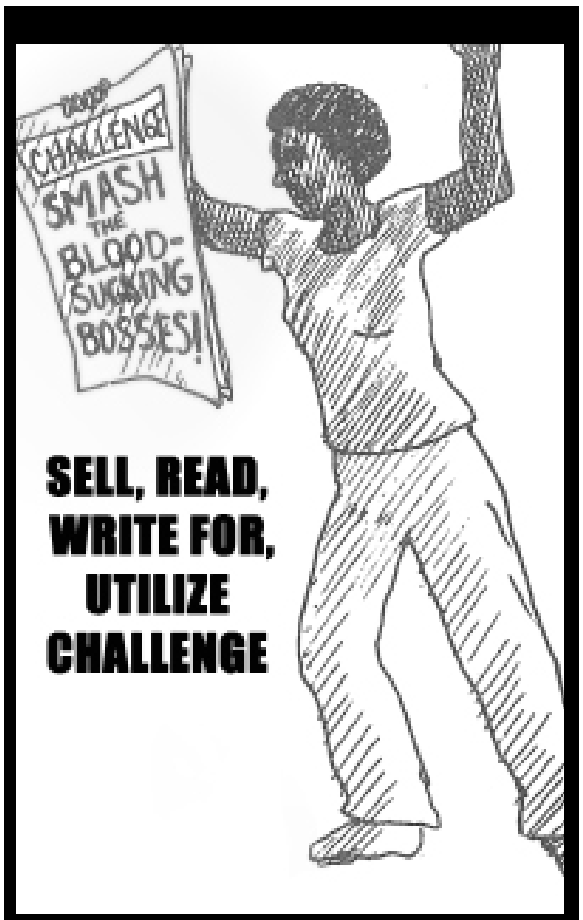
I work nights as a nurse, and my unit is almost always busy. Nurses at my hospital are not represented by a union. And though unions are hardly a guarantee to create safe or acceptable working conditions, non-union work places allows the bosses to run operations at a bare minimum and not expect any major repercussions. The nurses and auxiliary staff are forced to take on more and more patients as admissions come, which compromises patient safety and burns us workers out.

A common issue that we encounter on my unit is a lack of nurse assistants. Nurse assistants perform basic but important care tasks, such as taking vital signs, cleaning patients up, and answering call lights. If they're not staffed for each shift, the registered and licensed nurses pick up these tasks instead, in addition to their typical workload.

The management on my unit is constantly assuring us that they're going to hire more of these assistants for nights, but months have passed with us being regularly understaffed. Far from demonstrating any managerial expertise, the bosses show their complete failure to plan for the needs of our class. And it goes beyond the character of just a few managers; under capitalism it is essential that a hospital or a business maximize profit and cut costs, over securing human needs.

This particular shift was very exhausting and unsafe. There was just one nurse assistant scheduled for the 12-hour shift, and the whole staff barely sat down all night, moving from room to room. There was a strong potential for us to give into the stress, and begin fighting among ourselves. But it never happened. What I witnessed instead was us workers– women, men, Black, Asian, Latin and white – cooperating, communicating and offering help as we skipped breaks and did what we needed to do to care for our patients. Workers on the front line, not expecting anything extra for their efforts; just working together to make our lives easier and safer.

This is just one of countless examples of workers doing what needs to be done, despite the miserable social and economic conditions created by the capitalist class. Our responsibility as a communist Party is to shine a light on these demonstrations of working-class solidarity, and use it as living proof that we don't need a parasitic group of "elites" to organize society. More often than not, workers know what they need to work and live. We just need to constantly struggle to show that the future that we all deserve can only be guaranteed under a communist society.



SELL, READ, WRITE FOR, UTILIZE CHALLENGE

Calling all communist artists, workers, students, organizers!

Are you or your collective interested in creating communist art and culture? We are looking for working-class inspired posters and comics!

contact desafio.challenge@gmail.com

Republicrats Push, Protect Racism

Many believe that electing more Democrats and Black and Latin politicians will make things better, that social programs will improve, and racism and sexism will decrease. Looking at Maryland, a democrat state through and through, we can see this is false.

Out of the past eight governors of Maryland, 6 were Democrats. Two-thirds of the State Senate and House of Delegates are Democrats. The racial demographics of the government match the demographics of the state: 30 percent of representatives are Black, as are Marylanders. The same trend occurs within county governments, too.

Yet CHALLENGE (2/10) exposed Maryland's intense racism. The Maryland Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights provides the strongest legal protection for police out of any state. Moreover, Maryland has a large number of Black kkkops, and Black workers are still targeted and terrorized. In fact, 78 percent of the victims that Black kkkops shoot are Black (Jacobin).

No matter what party or race, it is clear whom politicians and police serve: the capitalist class. Black and Democratic politicians have no interest in protecting the working class—Black, Latin, Asian, or white—from police terror. The bosses who need racist police terror to protect private property and keep workers, especially Black workers, in line and scared to fight back. That is how they can keep making profits off our backs.

Let's not get conned by the next so-called left-wing, Black, Latin, or woman candidate. History shows that none of these make a difference in outcome for the working class. We must instead join PLP and fight for communist revolution!

Communists Led the Creation of Weekends Off

Sometimes we may overlook how mass communist-led working-class action has affected the lives of millions of workers. I particularly liked the CHALLENGE editorial (2/10) about Flint—"Capitalism Toxic for Working Class" — when it referred to the historic battle of Flint autoworkers in the Great Sit-Down Strike of 1936-1937. Incidentally, six of the seven members of the Flint Sit-Down Committee who led the strike were communists.

This Flint battle was part of the communist-led struggles for unemployment insurance—organizing 800,000 workers into the National Unemployment Councils, union recognition for four million workers into the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations), and the 40-hour work-week. Actually it was the communists who produced something which tens of millions now take for granted: weekends off.

Before the 40-hour week, the overwhelming majority of workers endured six- and seven-day workweeks, and, for a great many, 10- and 12-hour days. The 40-hour week—mostly based on five eight-hour days—meant two days off. It also forced the bosses to pay time-and-a-half for overtime, even double-time for some.

The bosses and their president Franklin Roosevelt did not "grant" this out of the goodness of their hearts. Roosevelt was out to save the capitalist system, which was mired in the Great Depression with its revolutionary potential for the working class. Unfortunately the Communist Party, whose members led this massive movement, did not point the working class in the direction of communist revolution. It was partly influenced by the international communist leadership that incorrectly championed a united front with so-called "progressive capitalists."

Of course, as capitalists do with all working-class reform victories, they chip away to wipe out the results of such victories, so today there are tens of millions who work more than 40 hours a week, more than five days, and are cheated out of overtime pay through various subterfuges. This is especially true for the racist practices directed at millions of undocumented immigrant workers. And with the connivance of pro-boss union misleaders, they have reduced the trade union movement to a shell of its former self, virtually wiping out the millions who had joined the CIO and avoiding strikes like the plague.

Capitalism by its nature has always operated in this way, grudgingly giving in to mass working-class action and then using its state power, its mis-direction into the election circus and its buying off of misleaders of these formerly militant movements to take back what the workers have won.

That is why the Progressive Labor Party is correct in our drive to organize millions into a mass revolutionary communist party to overthrow this brutal profit system and establish a worker-run communist society, eliminating bosses and profits altogether.

Mexico Education

continued from page 4

for Mexico and the approval of the structural reforms that the national and international bosses are using to take over natural resources like oil, beaches, mines, and water. Most of the working class is now suffering from high unemployment, low salaries and hunger.

History shows that these misleaders do not serving working-class interests. They are colluding with the bosses in attacking the movement in exchange furthering their electoral career ambitions.

Don't Vote, Organize for Workers' Power

The participating delegates in the Political Congress and its working class base must avoid being part of this illusion of democracy. It is nothing more than a bourgeois dictatorship oppressing and exploiting us with their reforms, their laws, institutions, jails, police, border patrol, and its army.

The working class will advance when we break the political and ideological chains that tie us to this capitalist system. The working class must depend on creating its own process of liberation, building towards a communist society without oppressors or oppressed.

The bosses have an open reign if the working class is not organized. They can take over our energy resources, our minerals, our water and much more. They can exploit us without mercy in exchange for a miserable salary.

The Progressive Labor Party is calling all the teachers, students, and workers, to fight for communism, a system organized and led by the workers, where the exploitation and violence against our working class will be outlawed. Smash this capitalist system that exploits, jails, and kills teachers, workers and students! Join us!✪

Book Review

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the other side of this contradiction: Leftist politics guided many aspects of the mass movement.

Lessons from Old Movement

The CP's turn towards reformism (e.g., its support for Roosevelt's New Deal and the Jim Crow Army) alienated Wright and others, and initially led them to criticize the CP from the left. Under pressure from the CIA and FBI, Wright later cut himself off from the communist movement. But Bryant's compilation contradicts the anti-communist lie he was fooled into or financially forced into being a communist.

PLP has consistently attacked the CP for selling out the workers and siding with liberal bosses. We organize directly for communism, relying only on the working class (not "lesser-evil" politicians). We understand that fighting racism is essential to defeating the profit system. These differences from the old communist movement have enabled us to grow internationally and win many workers to a communist outlook.

Times were very hard in the Harlem of Wright's day. But *Byline Richard Wright* reveals that thousands of class-conscious anti-racists, both Party members and rank-and-file activists, threw themselves into organizing efforts guided by the vision of a better world. Although circumstances have changed, PLP members working in mass organizations today can gain both guidance and inspiration from studying the achievements of the 1930s.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Racist frame-ups on the rise

NYT, 2/4 — A record 149 people in the United States were found in 2015 to have been falsely convicted of a crime…nearly four in ten were exonerated of murder.

The review by the National Registry of Exonerations said the inmates had spent more than 14 years behind bars on average, with some serving more than three decades….

The annual tally of false convictions has more than doubled since 2011….recording 1,733 exonerations since 1989….

The bulk…came from…Texas, where 54 people were cleared, and New York with 17….

Official misconduct played a role in 65…and false confessions…in 27. The most common reason inmates ere cleared, in 75…cases, was that no crime had even been committed….

The registry found that more than two-thirds of those exonerated in 2015 were minorities and half were African-American. Five defendants had death sentences.

CIA backed terror in Guatemala

GW, 2/5 — First the army came for….fifteen Mayan peasant leaders…in eastern Guatemala…[who] were…killed or forcibly disappeared….

…[Then] they came for the women. Soldiers raped them in front of their children, burned down their houses and crops, stole their meager belongings and made them move into shacks outside a military base…. where they were forced to cook, clean and submit to systematic rape….It was 1982…as counter-insurgency operations against ethnic Mayans intensified under the rule of the military dictator and evangelical Christian, Efrain Rios Monti….

The 1960-1996 civil war was triggered by a CIA-backed coup after an elected president promised land reform. Monti justified the violence by claiming the victims were communist guerrillas. But army actions were largely about protecting the interests of rich landowners.

Racist system's poisons children

NYT, 2/7 — …The lead poisoning of children in Flint, Mich. [is] an outrage…called "state-sponsored child abuse."

But lead poisoning goes far beyond Flint, and in many parts of America seems to be even worse.

"Lead in Flint is the tip of the iceberg," notes [a]…former director at the Centers for Disease Control….

In Flint, 4.9 percent of children tested for lead…have elevated levels….In New York State outside of New York City, the figure was 6.7 percent. In Pennsylvania, 8.5 percent. On the west side of Detroit, one-fifth of the children tested in 2014 had lead poisoning. In Iowa for 2012….32 percent of children tested had elevated lead levels….

Across America, 535,000 children ages 1 through 5 suffer lead poisoning….

…A professor…at Mount Sinai [NY City said] "Lead poisoning continues to be a silent epidemic in the United States."

…Flint…is particularly horrifying because it was delivered by the government through the municipal water system even as state officials scoffed at the local outcry….

Some 24 million homes in America have deteriorated lead paint….If a toddler regularly breathes lead-contaminated dust…that child may suffer lifelong brain damage….

Lead poisoning is an old problem…diagnosed…first…in 1994….

Yet the lead industry ferociously fought attempts at regulation….Millions of children continue to suffer brain impairment because of the greed of the lead industry….

Today the continuing poisoning of half a million American children is tolerated…because the victims often are low-income children of color.

Greece: 'radical left' attacks workers

GW, 1/29 — One year after taking power, Greece's prime minister. Alexis Tsipras, has embraced wholesale the austerity measures that he once decried….

Tsipras has jettisoned his radicalism to stay in power at all costs….He has adopted a harsh policy,…raised taxes and sold off Greek banks to speculative funds, privatized airports and ports, and is about to slash pensions….

[Tispras's party] Syriza…has not simply failed to deliver on its promises but…adopted the program of the opposition wholesale.

Richard Wright Review

Study Communist History, Organize the Masses

Richard Wright was a famous anti-racist Black writer in the United States during the mid-20th century. While the ruling class portrays him as an anti-communist from the get-go, *Byline Richard Wright: Articles from the Daily Worker and New Masses (2015)*, compiled by Earle V. Bryant, reveals Wright's enthusiasm for the U.S. and international communist movement in the 1930s. By reading this collection, we can gain historical insights on how to organize among masses of workers.

Best known as the author of Native Son (1940) and Black Boy (1945), Wright was Harlem chief for the Daily Worker—the newspaper of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA)—for six months in 1937. He wrote more than two hundred news stories, along with several pieces published in the New Masses, the CPUSA's cultural magazine. A large sampling of these writings are gathered in *Byline Richard Wright*.

The collection sheds valuable light on political organizing during the high point of the CPUSA's leadership in the class struggle:

★ "The Shame Spot of New York" focuses on rent strikes, demonstrations for lower prices, and protests against denial of medical care and police brutality. Many of these actions were spearheaded by women.

★ "The Winds of War" documents support in Harlem for the Spanish Loyalists and Chinese anti-fascists.

★ "Heroes Sung and Unsung" describes Harlem's memorials for William Campbell, a white truck driver who lost his life saving Black children from a tenement fire.

★ "Art for Life's Sake" details the emergence of a revolutionary culture around the defense of the Scottsboro Boys, the reception of radical blues artist Lead Belly, and the short-lived literary magazine, New Challenge.

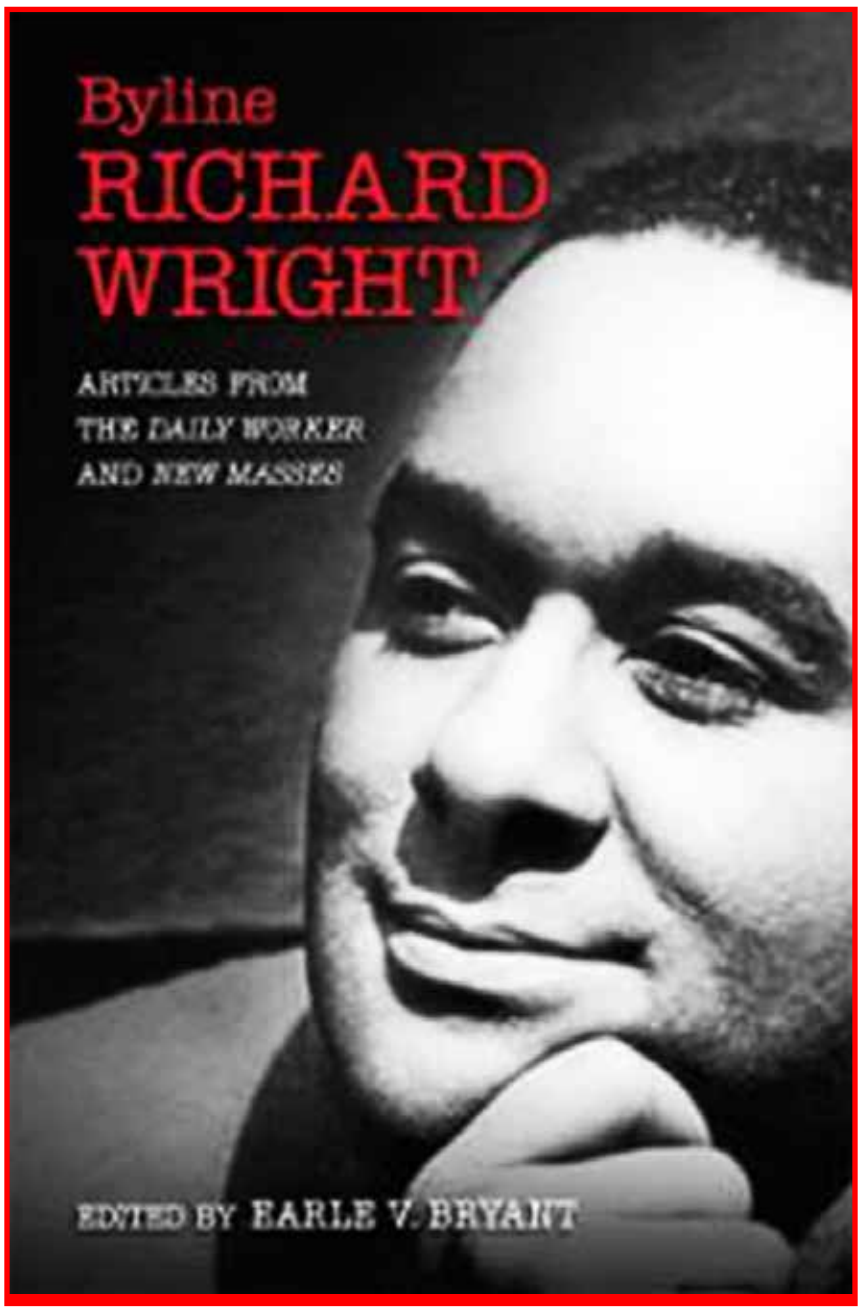
A study of the anti-racist history of the U.S. is important for communists in the current period. It helps to develop leaders who are in touch with the masses and fight for principled politics, in the interest of the whole working class.

Wright No Anti-Communist Skeptic

While literary historians have stressed Wright's break from communism, his enthusiasm for the achievements of the CP-led mass movement is stunningly apparent here. For example, in an August 1937 piece titled "What Happens at a Communist Party Branch Meeting in the Harlem Section," Wright alludes to how the Soviet Union is "building Socialism"; details egalitarian interactions between women and men, Black and white; and concludes that "for the first time in American history the Negro is receiving his [sic] highest possible pitch of social consciousness [through]…education from the vanguard of the working class, the Communist Party."

In Harlem's reaction to the victory of Joe Louis, a black U.S. boxer, over Nazi Germany's Max Schmeling, Wright discerns "the secret dynamics of proletarian aspiration. . . . They wanted to feel that the world was theirs as much as anybody else's. . . . They wanted to own things in common and do things in common."

These are not the words of an anti-communist skeptic.



Besides detailing rank-and-file CP activity, *Byline Richard Wright* reveals the significant influence of the CP within the broader antifascist workers' movement of the time, known as the Popular Front. The names in Wright's reportage are an honor roll of anti-racist fighters from the time: Benjamin Davis, Angelo Herndon, Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., "Queen Mother" Audley Moore, Louise Patterson, Richard B. Moore, Thyra Edwards, Harry Haywood, Langston Hughes, Max Yergan, A. Philip Randolph, and—yes—even Thurgood Marshall, who subsequently would become the first Black U.S. Supreme Court justice.

While a number of these figures would later pull back from their communist affiliations, and the Popular Front involved the CP in problematic cross-class alliances, Wright's writings reveal

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